

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR, FR, NATO, MCAP, US

SUBJ: MEETING WITH CHIEF OF STAFF OF FRENCH ARMED FORCES MAURIN

STATE FOR THE SECRETARY

DEFENSE FOR SECRETARY SCHLISINGER

USNATO FOR AMBASSADOR RUMSFELD

USNMR SHAPE FOR GENERAL GOOD PASTER

1. SUMMARY. GENERAL MARUIN, CHIEF OF STAFF OF FRENCH ARMED FORCES, AND TWO OF HIS COLLEAGUES LUNCED WITH ME AT RESIDENCE NOV 15. MAURIN STRESSED HIS CONCERN WITH EFFECT OF DETENTE ON WILLINGNESS OF WEST EUROPEAN NATIONS TO MAINTAIN ADEQUATE DEFENSES IN FACE OF SIZEABLE SOVIET MILITARY BUILDUP IN EASTERN EUROPE. REFERRING TO DOD BRIEFING ON MILITARY BALANCE IN EUROPE, HE UNDERLINED FUNDAMENTAL DISAGREEMENT THAT FRENCH MILITARY AUTHORITIES HAVE WITH OUR DATA BASE AND CONCLUSIONS. MAURIN BRIEFLY MENTIONED LOC STAFF TALKS IN WASHINGTON AND PROBLEMS OF WESTERN CONSULTATION DEMONONSTRATED DURING MIDDLE EAST CRISIS. END SUMMARY.

2. DETENTE. THROUGHOUT OUR DISCUSSION, MAURIN VOICED SERIOUS CONCERNS ABOUT EFFECT OF DETENTE ON WILL OF WESTERN NATIONS TO
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MAINTAIN DEFENSE FORCES ADEQUATE TO SOVIET THREAT. HE SAID THAT DURING RECENT VISIT TO PARIS, MARSHALLKOULIKOV (SOVIET CHIEF OF STAFF) TOLD HIM THAT SOVIETS WERE SEEKING EQUIVALENCE WITH US IN STRATEGIC, TACTICAL MUCLEAR, AND CONVENTIONAL FORCES.

MAURIN IS CONVINCED FROM DISCUSSIONS WITH KOULIKOV AND FROM GREAT EMPHASIS SOVIETS ATTACH TO EXPANDING THEIR MILITARY POWER, THAT SOVIETS ARE BUILDING MILITARY FOUNDATION TO SUPPORT SOVIET POLICY OF EXPANSION AIMED AT DOMINATING WESTERN EUROPE, INCLUDING FRANCE. IN THIS REGARD, MAURIN SAID REDUCTIONS IN US FORCES IN EUROPE WOULD FUEL WESTERN EUROPE'S PERCEPTION THAT (A) THE SOVIET THREAT WAS DECREASED OR (B) IT WAS HOPELES TO MOUNT AN EFFECTIVE DEFENSE AGAINST SOVIET MILITARY POWER. IN EITHER CASE, THE RESULT WOULD BE THE SAME; REDUCTIONS IN WESTERN EUROPE'S OWN DEFENSE. MAURIN SEES A DANGEROUS CYCLE PRO Pelled BY DETENT LEADING TO REDUCTION OF US FORCES IN EUROPE AND CONSEQUENT REDUCTIONS BY OTHER ALLIES WHICH WOULD ENCOURAGE FURTHER US REDUCTIONS AND MORE EUROPEAN REDUCTIONS.

3. CONVENTIONAL BALANCE. MAURIN MENTIONED THAT WHEN FRENCH MINISTER OF ARMED FORCES GALLEY RETURNED FROM HIS RECENT TRIP TO US, HE TOLD MAURIN THAT HE HAD RECEIVED INFORMATION ON MILITARY BALANCE IN CENTRAL EUROPE THAT DIFFERED SUBSTANTIALLY FROM FRENCH VIEW. MAURIN SAID THAT FRENCH MILITARY DOES NOT AGREE WITH DATA BASE THAT US IS USING IN ITS MILITARY BALANCE BRIEFING NOR DO THE FRENCH AGREE THAT NATO HAS CAPABILITY OF MOUNTING SUSTAINED CONVENTIONAL DEFENSE IN CENTRAL EUROPE. MOREOVER, SAID MAURIN, HE HEARS THAT NATO ALLIES (EXCLUDING THE FRENCH) MAY CONCLUDE FROM US BRIEFING THAT NATO'S DEFENSES ARE SO STRONG THAT THEY CAN BE FURTHER REDUCED WITHOUT RUNNING SERIOUS RISK. MAURIN REPEATED WELL-KNOWN FRENCH RESISTANCE TO POSSIBILITY OF RE-FIGHTING WORLD WARS I AND II IN EUROPE. I POINTED OUT THAT WE SHARE WITH FRANCE THE VIEW THAT DETERRENCE IS PRIMARY OBJECT OF WEST'S MILITARY POSTURE. OUR EMPHASIS ON IMPROVING NATO'S CONVENTIONAL FORCE POSTURE (INCLUDING US CONTRIBUTION) IS BASED ON BELIEF THAT DETERRENCE MUST INCLUDE SUBSTANTIAL STRATEGIC AND TACTICAL NUCLEAR FORCES AS WELL AS ADEQUATE IN-PLACE CONVENTIONAL FORCES TO BE CREDIBLE. ONLY BY MAINTAINING THIS COMPLETE RANGE OF MILITARY CAPABILITY CAN WE EXPECT DETERRENCE TO REMAIN CREDIBLE TO OTHER SIDE. MOREOVER, THERE WERE NUMBER OF SCENARIOS FOR POSSIBLE SOVIET AGGRESSION AGAINST THE WEST, SOME AT LOWER LEVELS OF INTENSITY WHICH WOULD NOT BE SECRET

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APPROPRIATE FOR AN EARLY NUCLEAR RESPONSE. IN ANY EVENT, SHOULD DETERRENCE FAIL, THE WEST SHOULD NOT BE LEFT WITH ONLY THE CHOICE BETWEEN STRATEGIC NUCLEAR RESPONSE AND SURRENDER. MAURIN NOTED THAT CONSTANTLY IMPROVING SOVIET FORCES WERE LOCATED ONLY 200 KILOMETERS FROM THE FRENCH BORDER AND THAT HE COULD NOT CONCEIVE OF CONVENTIONAL CONFLICT IN EUROPE THAT WOULD NOT RE-

QUIRE EARLY USE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

4. LOC TALKS. DRAWING ON OUR DISCUSSION OF CONVENTIONAL CAPABILITIES, MAURIN REFERRED TO THE LINE OF COMMUNICATIONS (LOC) TALKS HELD LAST WEEK IN WASHINGTON BETWEEN MEMBERS OF HIS STAFF AND US MILITARY AUTHORITIES. MAURIN SAID THAT US REPRESENTATIVES

HAD TALKED IN TERMS OF NEEDING 40 DAYS TO ESTABLISH AN LOC ACROSS FRANCE ONCE DECISION HAD BEEN MADE TO ACTIVATE LOC. IT WAS QUITE CLEAR THAT THIS LENGTH OF TIME DEEPLY TROUBLED MAURIN. HE WAS PESSIMISTIC THAT THE WEST WOULD RECEIVE ANYTHING LIKE 40 DAYS OF ADVANCE WARNING BEFORE SOVIET ATTACK. HE ALSO REJECTED THE IDEA THAT A CONVENTIONAL CONFLICT COULD LAST 40 DAYS WITHOUT ESCALATION TO NUCLEAR WAR. MAURIN MADE IT QUITE CLEAR THAT AN LOC BASED ON EITHER ASSUMPTION WAS NOT CONSISTENT WITH FRENCH STRATEGIC THINKING.

5. CONSULTATION. MAURIN SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THAT US AND SOVIETS WOULD CONSULT BILATERALLY ON MATTERS PERTAINING SOLELY TO THEIR INTERESTS. HE DID NOT SEEM PARTICULARLY CONCERNED THAT CONSULTATION WITH NATO ALLIES ON SUCH SUBJECTS MIGHT NOT BE DETAILED OR TIMELY. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT ON ISSUES WHERE VITAL INTERESTS OF ALLIES WERE CONCERNED (SUCH AS MIDDLE EAST CRISIS), SITUATION WAS QUITE DIFFERENT AND US COULD NOT EXPECT TO HAVE SUPPORT OF ALLIES UNLESS CONSULTATION WAS BOTH TIMELY AND COMPLETE. HE MENTIONED THAT THROUGHOUT THE CRISIS FRENCH TELEVISION AND NEWS TICKERS REMAINED HIS BEST SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON EVOLVING MILITARY SITUATION IN MIDDLE EAST. EVEN THE NATO MILITARY INTELLIGENCE NETWORK PRODUCED NOTHING OF REAL VALUE, ACCORDING TO MAURIN.

6. COMMENT: MAURIN'S COMMENTS ACCURATELY REFLECT TRENDS IN SENIOR FRENCH MILITARY THINKING, PARTICULARLY WITH REGARD TO THE NEGATIVE EFFECT OF DETENTE ON EUROPE'S DEFENSES, AND TO STRONG FRENCH CONVICTION THAT ANY POSSIBILITY OF SUSTAINED CONVENTIONAL CONFLICT IN CENTRAL EUROPE BE VIGOROUSLY
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